

AN
EARNEST ADDRESS
TO HIS
PARISHIONERS,
BY A
MINISTER
OF THE
Church of *ENGLAND*,
CONCERNING
The NECESSITY, NATURE, MEANS,
and MARKS of TRUE FAITH
IN
CHRIST JESUS.

Design'd principally for the POOR.

To the Poor the Gospel is preached. Luke vii. 22.

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AN HYMN to the HOLY GHOST,
From the *Ordination of Priests*, in the Book
of *Common Prayer*.

COME Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial Fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy seven-fold Gifts impart:
Thy blessed Unction from above,
Is Comfort, Life, and Fire of Love:
Enable with perpetual Light,
The Dulness of our blinded Sight.
Anoint and cheer our soiled Face,
With the Abundance of thy Grace:
Keep far our Foes, give Peace at Home,
Where thou art Guide, no Ill can come:
Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And thee, of both—to be but ONE:
That through the Ages all along,
This may be our endless Song:
Praise to thy eternal Merit,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.





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EARNEST ADDRESS

TO HIS

PARISHIONERS,

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A Minister of the GOSPEL.

MY Office, dearly beloved, renders it necessary, that I shou'd use every Means, and try every Method to forward and promote your eternal Welfare: and the Love, I bear to each one amongst you, as by God's Permission and good Pleasure, your unworthy Teacher, makes me no less ready to try every Means, than anxiously desirous, that they shou'd prove successful on your Behalf. Upon this Consideration, you will, I doubt not, receive this little Treatise in the Spirit, where-with it is written, the Spirit of Love: and endeavour on your Parts, to answer its Design, and bless the well-meant Labours of him, who wisheth you a full Enjoyment of all those Things which pertain to God. — Read it with a single Eye, to be instructed: Not with a curious or unconcerned Temper: It wou'd speak to your Heart; and humbly implores the divine Spirit to carry its Truths to your Consciences. And now, before you enter upon it, if you are really in earnest, and wish to receive any Profit herefrom, tending to your Knowledge in hea-

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venly Things, pray to that blessed Teacher, * that he wou'd give you the *hearing Ear*, and *understanding Heart*; that you may read with Comfort to your Souls; be strengthen'd by his Might in the inner Man; and daily be built up more and more in the Faith. If you are not inclined to put up a most serious Prayer to him, that he wou'd deign make this weakest of all his Instruments a Means of Grace to your Soul, lay it aside and read no further; it can only enhance your Condemnation: it can do your Head no Good, if it doth not reach unto your Heart.

But I am persuaded, my beloved, you are far more seriously inclined: And are not so lost to all Religion and concern for your immortal Souls, as willingly and deliberately to plunge into everlasting Destruction.—Answer to God even now, and if you have heitherto delay'd to do it, in Sincerity examine yourself. What think you concerning your State?—Why was you created and to what End, sent into this World?—But a little while, and your Place shall know you no more: But a little while, and all your Schemes, and Labours, and Pleasures, and Troubles, and Miseries, shall be at an End: your Body become a Lump of corrupting Clay, and your Soul [Oh alarming Truth] either a fellow sufferer

* I would not prescribe any form of Words, let those, who can, speak from their Hearts; but if any (as not able so to do) rather choose a few Words. I would recommend something of this Sort: “ Oh blessed and holy Spirit, give us of thy Unction, which teacheth all Things (1 John ii, 20.) Now teach us, open our Hearts, direct, rule and guide us.”—Or in the Words of our Church—“ O God for as much as without thee, we are not able to please thee; Mercifully grant, that thy holy Spirit may in this particularly, and in all other Things, constantly, direct and rule our Hearts; so that by thy Holy Inspiration we may think those Things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same thro' our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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with Devils, or a fellow Saint with the Saints and Angels of your God!--- This is fixed, sure, and irrevocable: Daily Observation shews you how your fellow Creatures lead the way to the Grave, how certain Death is, but how very uncertain the Time and Hour.

And have you no one single Desire to be prepared for this great Change? Have you never one serious Thought concerning it?—What, my Brother, are you contented to lead a poor, wretched, miserable Life here, and to be condemned to one that is far worse hereafter? I speak to you, that are Poor and in a Mean Condition; who are yet for that Reason not less beloved and esteemed of your dear and dying Master--- He was himself a poor Man, *he had not where to lay his Head*; he chose the poor for his Disciples, and Followers; he preached the Gospel to the Poor; nay, and founded his Religion on that *Poverty of Spirit* (Matt. v. 3.) to which worldly Poverty more especially conduces: He chose the *foolish, weak, base and despised Things of the World* to confound the *Wise, and the Mighty*: And because you are Poor, he is nearer to your wants and Petitions, his Ears are ever open to your Cries: — And have you no Love for such a Master? No Inclination to be made rich by his inestimable Bounty?

Alas! alas! what a miserable State is yours?—All the Frowns and Sorrows of this World fall to your heavy Lot, Poverty, Distress, and Sufferings, — And yet you will not take care to have your good Things in the next: For your bad Things here, will be no Reason for better hereafter, unless you do your Parts towards the procuring them. Oh reflect upon this, my dear Fellow Christians, and as God hath seen proper to Place you in a low Estate, draw near to him, and his heavenly Comforts shall abound the more, as earthly ones are wanting to you. — Say not, “ I am so poor and unlearned,

“ God Almighty will expect little from me ; I am so
 “ ill dressed and basely clad, I cannot go to his
 “ Church ; I am so mean and worthless, he will not
 “ condescend to look upon me ---” These are very
 lame and false Excuses: The poorer you are the bet-
 ter for God: Yet you are his Creature; and he is
 Lord of all the World, and will give you, if you
 ask it, eternal Riches, *Gold tried in the Fire to make*
you rich, Rev. iii. 18. The less Wisdom you have,
 the better: be as a little Child, submit to the Wis-
 dom of your Master, be taught of him, and you will
 be wiser than all the great and learned upon Earth:
 Wait in Humility for the Teaching of his eternal Spi-
 rit, and you will soon know all Things necessary to Life
 eternal. And what is your outward Dress? God asks
 for the *inward adorning of the Heart*, he looks not
 upon our outward Bravery and Attire: † No, no; a
 Man in Rags, but cloathed with his Graces and

† It is greatly to be wished that Dressing to worship
 God was less universally practised: Let their own Hearts
 speak for them, who do so, whether they really come
 to Church with a pure Intention to serve God, in Spi-
 rit and Truth, or to *set up an Idol*, and to display them-
 selves: I wou'd to God they wou'd seriously consider
 these Words of St. Peter, too remarkably applicable to
 the present Times: “ Whose adorning let it not be the
 “ outward adorning of *plaiting the Hair*, and of wearing
 “ of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it be
 “ the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not
 “ corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet
 “ Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price,”
 &c. 1 Pet. iii. 4, &c.—I would recommend also the third
 Chapter of *Isaiah*, Ver. 16. to the careless Daughters:
 And as to all, so to married Women, especially a care-
 ful avoiding all ridiculous Fashions, such as *turning up of*
Hats before and behind, bare Breasts, short Petticoats, &c.
 &c.—which are very unlike those Things wherewith
 the *Holy Women of old adorned themselves, who trusted in*
God, and were in Subjection to their own Husbands.

Righteousness

Righteousness, is far preferable to the richest Noble, clothed in Purple, Gold, and fine Linnen: Read the Story of *Dives* and *Lazarus* and you will soon be satisfied in that Point: *Luke* xvi. 19. The meaner and more worthless you are, in your own Sight, the more need have you of something to make you acceptable to God; and for this very Reason it was, because you and all Mankind are and were worthless, wretched despicable Sinners, that your beloved Saviour died on the Cross, to purchase your Redemption by his own Blood, and to give you *Merit* and *Righteousness* in the Sight of his Father: so that if you see and confess this, you are far advanced towards the Kingdom of God, and have only to draw near, and to accept that Gift by Faith, which justifieth freely every contrite Sinner.

But waving these Things, let us stick close to the Point wherein we are all agreed, and wherein Rich and Poor are alike concerned (for all lye down in the Grave together) — *Die we must, and after Death be judged*: For God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man, [even Christ Jesus,] whom he hath ordained: Whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. *Acts* xvii. 31.

And do you really believe this? You cannot help believing it. We see it, know it *without*; and feel its Power constantly *within*, working upon our Minds and Consciences. You do then really believe you must die; and after Death be happy or miserable to all Eternity. — But, oh strange and marvellous Belief, you never earnestly seek after this Blessing; you believe, and confess it with your Mouth, but deny it in your Life and Practice. For what avails your Belief of these Things? — How will that profit your Souls? — How can that excuse you? Nay rather, how must not that condemn

you at the great Day? — Think what a sorrowful Appearance you will then make, when the great and terrible Judge shall put such a Question as this to you. — “ If you knew you was to die, and after Death to be judged, why did you not endeavour to prepare yourself for a happy Reception, by the Knowledge of my Truth?” — You must be struck dumb with Terror and Astonishment; and who can express your Agonies, when your dear and beloved Master is compelled to pronounce the dreadful Sentence, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Matt. xxv. 41. That Day *must* come, that Sentence assuredly be passed, unless we seek after God in the Way which he hath appointed; and whether poor or rich, we of this Nation can admit of no Excuse, *particularly* blest as *we* are, with his Gospel, and the Knowledge of Salvation. If we can read, we have his blessed Word to direct us; if we can hear, we have his Preachers every Sabbath-Day, at the least, to instruct us. It is our own Faults, if we omit either to read that Book, or to hear those Preachers; we must answer for that, and it will be difficult for any Man to satisfy his Conscience for this Neglect, but much more difficult to reply unto the God of Judgment.

You are convinced then, I would hope, of these Things; (settle them well in your Mind :) and as convinced, really desirous to make this Judge your Friend, and to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh happy Desire, encourage and inflame it all you can; and attend diligently, while I point out to you the right and only true Way unto your Master's Love and everlasting Joy.

He himself hath declared — *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*, John xiv. 6. And St. Peter assures us, that there is no Salvation in any other than

Jesus Christ : *Neither is there Salvation in any other ; For there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, See Acts iv. 12.* Observe then, whatever you expect, it must absolutely and wholly proceed from this Almighty and All-sufficient Saviour ; reflect a little upon this Scripture, and implore his Grace to bring it home to your Heart.

It is said in another Part of the *Acts* x. 43. — that “ It is he (Jesus Christ) which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of Quick and Dead : To him give all the Prophets Witness, that through his Name, whosoever *believeth* in his Name, shall receive Remission of Sins. Agreeable to which, St. Paul saith, “ *This is a true Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received ; That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.* And, *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved, Rom. x. 9.* The same St. Paul also informs us, that by Grace we are saved through Faith, and that not of ourselves ; it is the Gift of God, not of Works, lest any Man should boast, *Eph. ii. 8.* Which great and fundamental Truth is confirmed by the best Authority possible, the Word of our Master himself, recorded by his blessed Spirit. — He tells us, God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life, *John iii. 16.* which the same St. John in his divine Epistles, again repeats for our Comfort and Edification. In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, *1 John iv. 9.*

So that you see (for it is needless to multiply Scriptures upon so plain a Point) that there is no Way to the Father, to Heaven, and eternal Bliss, but by this Saviour, this Jesus, *who came into the World to save his People from their Sins*, Matt. i. 21. that, *Faith* or *Belief* in him is the sole Terms of our Acceptance with God; and that this *Faith* and Salvation is also his free *Grace* and *Gift*. — Have you then this Faith? For you cannot but see the *Necessity* of it. Do you indeed *confess* the Lord Jesus with your Mouth, and believe on *him* in your Heart, *as the only Mediator between God and Man*, and his the only Name under Heaven, whereby you can be saved? (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.) Plain it is, that if such be not the Case, you must certainly and eternally perish. For when clothed with Power after his Resurrection, he sealed all his former Words, - with this absolute Decree: *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16.

Yes, perhaps, you will reply, I do *believe*, and I have been *baptized*; but first, let me ask, has your *Baptism* wrought in you that *new Birth*, which is its only Advantage? Have you in sincere *Repentance* and true *Faith* taken upon you the Covenant, the Vow and Promises made for you by your Sureties in Baptism? And do you renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh? — Do you believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his Commandments? If such be not the Case, your Baptism will very little profit you; for the outward Sign without the inward Grace is nothing, the washing with Water unaccompanied by the Death unto Sin, and the new Life unto Righteousness; nor will the Laver of Regeneration avail, without the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus iii. 5. All this is strange and new to you; you have ne-

ver done, no, nor ever thought of thus renewing your Covenant, and taking the Promise upon yourself, and yet you say, that you believe in Christ; that you do indeed *believe* all which the Scriptures say concerning him. — You have no Doubt of it — no more than of any Facts recorded in the History of your own Nation. This *Faith* is something gained; it is an happy Beginning, and may produce Fruits; but if you rest in it, your *Belief* will be of very little Consequence, and stand your Soul but in poor Stead. You can say your *Creed*; (though it is to be feared, I speak now to many who are not able to do even that, which yet I trust, they will make haste to learn and understand) You can repeat your *Creed*, and this you call your *Belief* or *Faith*, as a *Christian*. But hath this *Belief* ever done its Work upon your *Heart*? Hath it *purified* your Heart? *Acts* xv. 9. Do you live by this Faith, as the active Principle, working at the Root of all you do, fixing you in Love and Obedience, 2 *Cor.* v. 7. And doth it as naturally and necessarily produce in your Soul all its Fruits and Effects, as the Breath in your Body performs all its Offices and Operations? For the Apostle uses this Comparison, and sure Note of living Faith. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*, James ii. 26. Is your Faith then thus alive, thus active, operative, and productive of its genuine Fruits? * You believe that Christ Je-
sus

* This Distinction is made by our Reformers in their excellent Homilies — “There is one *Faith* (say they) which in Scripture is called a dead Faith, which bringeth forth no good Works, but is idle, barren, and unfruitful. And this Faith, by the holy Apostle St. James, is compared to the Faith of Devils, which believe God to be true and just, and tremble for Fear; yet they do nothing well, but all Evil, &c.

Another

us came into the World to save Sinners? But then do you know that you are a Sinner yourself, and that he came for you in particular, and that there is Salvation for you in no other? — You know that he died on the Cross as a Sacrifice for Sin, and a Ransom for many. But then do you, as believing this, die to Sin yourself, and crucify it daily, not suffering that to reign in you, which nailed your bleeding Master

Another Faith there is in Scripture, which is not (as the foresaid Faith) idle, unfruitful, and dead; but worketh by Charity (as St. *Paul* declareth, *Gal. v.*) which as the other vain Faith is called a dead Faith, so may this be called a quick or lively Faith. And this is not only the common Belief of the Articles of our Faith, but it is also a true Trust and Confidence of the Mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a stedfast Hope of all good Things to be received at God's Hand; and that although we through Infirmary, or Temptation of our ghostly Enemies do fall from him by Sin, yet if we return again unto him by true Repentance, that he will forgive and forget our Offences, for his Son's Sake, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and will make us Inheritors with him of his everlasting Kingdom; and that in the mean Time, until that Kingdom come, he will be our Protector and Defender in all Perils and Dangers, whatsoever do chance. And that though sometime he doth send us sharp Adversity, yet that evermore he will be a loving Father unto us, correcting us for our Sin, but not withdrawing his Mercy finally from us, if we trust in him, and commit ourselves wholly unto him, hang only upon him, and call upon him; ready to obey and serve him. This is the true, lively, and unfeigned Christian Faith, and is not in the Mouth and outward Profession only, but it *liveth, and stirreth inwardly in the Heart*. And this Faith is not without Hope and Trust in God, nor without the Love of God, and of our Neighbours, nor without the Fear of God, nor without Desire to hear God's Word; and to follow the same, in eschewing Evil, and doing gladly all good Works. — See the Homily on Faith, Part the 1st.

Master to the Cross? You believe that he rose again from the Dead; but do you, from the Death of Sin, rise again unto the Life of Righteousness? — You believe him to have ascended into Heaven, but do “*you in Heart and Mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell*, as your Heart’s only Hope, Desire, and Treasure? for most assuredly, *where the Treasure is, there will the Heart be also*, Matt. vi. 21. You believe that he shall come to be the Judge of Quick and Dead; but do you by a firm Reliance on his Merits, and a full Trust, only to be accepted in and through him, adore the Greatness of his Mercy and Power, the infinite Worth of his Person and Righteousness; and the mere Nothingness, Insignificance and Sinfulness of yourself, and all your Doings; and therefore expect to be found in him, not facing your own Righteousness, *which is of the Law*, but that *which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*? See St. Paul to the *Philippians*, iii. 9, &c. Alas, alas, if your Faith doth not produce these Fruits, you have very little to expect from the Saviour of the World.

Faith cannot be sincere or profitable, unless it hath *Repentance* and Sorrow for Sin going before it; *Obedience* and Holiness of Life following after it. For were you not a Sinner, there would have been no Need of an Atonement, a sacrificed, a bleeding Redeemer; but as you are a Sinner, you must either die yourself, or some Ransom be paid to preserve you from the due Punishment and Death eternal, since *without shedding of Blood there is no Remission*, Heb. ix. 22. God the Father not willing that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting Life, out of his unbounded *Love* to the World, sent his only begotten and most dearly beloved Son into it, to become a *Sacrifice* and *Propitiation* for the Sins thereof. (See Pag. 7.) The Son out of his unbounded Love to us of his own Accord, took this great Work upon him

him, and paid the Ransom due to Almighty Justice ; our Sins nailed him to the Cross, and he died, not only to save us from the Guilt, but also the Power of them. Oh turn your Eyes, dearly beloved, turn your Eyes to your suffering Master ! Hear him from yon Cross calling out to you in the most tender and pathetic Manner — “ Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold and see if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, where-with the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce Anger ? *Lam. i. 12.* Oh turn your Eyes, behold him stretched, — every Nerve strained and swelling, — every Sinew at the utmost Extension, — every Vein ready to gush out with Blood ; — behold him hanging on the accursed Tree ! See how the Thorns have cruelly gored his most precious Temples, — see how the Blood mingled with Sweat, trickles down his Cheeks, worn out and pale with Sorrow ; — see how the vast and sharp-pointed Nails have terribly made their Way through the crashing Bones and quivering Arteries of his dear Hands and Feet : — See how his Body writhes with bitter Agony : — Hark how his Heart groans with intolerable Anguish — behold — but stop, my Soul — the Contemplation is too affecting ! All, all for me, my Saviour, my Master, and my God ; and how shall I, poor sinful Dust and Ashes — how shall I ever be capable of making thee the least Return !

Oh, my Friend, look a while, reflect, meditate upon this God of Love, whose Sufferings are far too great for me to express, or you to comprehend — look up to him — and, if you can profess a *Faith* in him, and not love and serve him, poor is your Faith, and worthless your Belief. If you believe that he suffered all this for you, and that Belief doth not work in your Heart, for his dear dying Sake, an Hatred, an utter Hatred of every Sin, an Abhorrence and deep Detestation of yourself for it, and a full Purpose



Purpose wholly to forsake it, and to lead a new Life, following all his blessed Commandments, — be assured you are yet not in the right Way, but far, very far from it; be assured the Spirit of God hath not yet done his Work in you; and that you yet have not that Faith, which alone can *justify*; which Knowledge should incline you to seek the more anxiously after his Grace and Assistance.

Our blessed Master, as we just now heard, (Page 8.) declares, that “ *He who believeth not, shall be damned.*” And in another Place he very peremptorily affirms, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,” *John* iii. 3. It is as impossible for a Man to enter into the Kingdom of God, unless he *be born* again, and so made a Child of God, and an Heir of his Kingdom, as it is to enter into this World without being born into it; as there is but one Way into this World, by being born of a Woman, so is there but one Way into the World to come, by being born of God. And if so, it is highly necessary for us to enquire what this *New Birth* meaneth. That to *believe* in Jesus, and to be *born again*, are in Effect the same, we naturally conclude from this, because they are in the Texts above, both made the Terms of Salvation; and St. Paul, as if on Purpose to set us right in this great Point, hath so explained it. Nothing but this *New Birth*, he declares, can avail us — “ For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a *New Creature*, *Gal.* vi. 15. That we may fully understand this — he saith in another Place of this Epistle, Chap. v. 6. In Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but *Faith, which worketh by Love.* And again — *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the Commandments of God,* *1 Cor.* vii. 19. So that to be a new
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Creature, plainly is, to have that Faith in Christ Jesus, *which worketh by Love*; which, through a Sense of God's Mercies in Christ, and Love to him therefore, becomes the active vital Principle of our new Life, enabling us to perform an acceptable Service, *keeping the Commandments of our God*.

The Question then is, whether really you have been so born again of God, or not? Deceive not yourselves, my Friends and Brethren, deceive not yourselves in this important Enquiry; for you see, without this *New Birth*, this *Faith working by Love*, you can have no Hope of Heaven, no Assurance of everlasting Glory; but on the Contrary are certain to perish everlastingly. Have you then been thus born again of God? Have you ever experienced that Change, that real internal Conversion of Life and Principle, which a New Birth naturally and necessarily supposes? Has your Life ever become New — *all Things being passed away*? 2 Cor. v. 17. For if you are in *Christ*, the Apostle affirms, you must be a New Creature.

But if you find it not so easy to satisfy yourself herein, examine, ask in Sincerity — Have you ever known Repentance or heart-felt Sorrow for Sin? Has that Repentance ever wrought Faith in you, a full Sense of your natural Sinfulness, and Incapacity to help yourself, but a “sure Trust and Confidence of the Mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;” (See the Note, p. 10.) and an absolute Reliance upon him, as the *Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the whole World*? John i. 29. And do you, as thus trusting, hoping, and believing in this great and only Saviour, do you love him with all your Heart, and so obey him with all your Strength? For if ye love me, keep my Commandments, is his own Demand; and he assures us, that we are his Friends only upon Condition, that we do whatsoever he commands us, See John xiv. 15, and xv. 12, 13, 14. Y

You cannot Mistake in this Enquiry: It is impossible: Repeat therefore these questions again and again to your Heart; pass them not hastily over, and read on carelessly—turn back, read again, search, weigh, consider, examine: Be not in haste, for it requireth much Deliberation---for remember, dearly Beloved, your Soul, your All, your eternal All is at Stake: your Master, your dying Master, calleth you to answer, the blessed Spirit stirreth you up, and inciteth you to reply; the holy Angels are in anxious concern for you—Eternity depends upon your Resolution—Oh then be wise and resolve, be wise and reply to the great God of Truth, who searcheth your Heart, and from whom no secret Thought lyeth hid.

And are you not moved by these great Things? Yes, I trust, you are truly and deeply affected with them: and searching your Heart, are convinced, and with Sighs and Tears confess it unto the Lord; that you have not yet experienc'd the Sweetness of his Mercy, not yet known, that blessed Work of the *New-Birth* upon your Heart, nor the Comforts of that Peace dwelling in it which passeth all Understanding?—And if you can once confess this, if you can once feel and know this, and are really desirous to be born again of God, and to become in *Christ Jesus* a new Creature, be assured, your Desire shall be gratified: For God will by no means cast out those, who with an humble and contrite Spirit, draw nigh unto him.

But be well aware, that you do not herein deceive yourself, nor expect any Thing from your own weak Means or Strength: This *Faith* is the Gift, the free Grace and Gift of God; and this New Birth can no more be formed in you, without the Operation of the blessed Spirit, than the Child be formed in the Womb, without the natural Means—Cast away then all vain Dependence upon yourself; be humbled even unto the Dust, in Heart and Spirit; and

give up all your Soul to the powerful Teaching of that Holy Ghost, who will make his Abode with you, dwelling in you, ever comforting, refreshing, and enlivening you; making you holy, and abounding in every good Word and Work. *Without him* you can do *nothing*, but yet you must do *something with him*: You must constantly *seek* for him, and when found, work with him; never resisting his gracious Motions, nor quenching his blessed Influence: Above all Things, you must be fervent and constant in *Prayer*, if you are really in earnest; and if in earnest, you will be so; as knowing, that your Master, *whose Words shall never pass away*, (Matt. xxiv. 35.) hath said, *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you*, Matt. vii. 7. *And if ye bring evil, know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke xi. 13. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, saith our Saviour, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if ye shall ask any thing in my Name, I will do it*, John xiv. 13. Relying upon these, and the numberless other Promises of the like Sort in Scripture, relying upon these inestimable Privileges, procured by your dying Lord; (in full Dependence upon them, and in full Trust, that what he hath promised, he will also perform) you will fall down, and ask these good Gifts of him, and raise up your Heart's Desire in deep Humility and Self-abasement, but in thorough Confidence of his Power and Readiness to hear and to grant. Thus you must pray, not with vain Words only, but with the *Heart*; for that alone can render your Prayer acceptable. And if your Heart's Desire is truly turned to God, if you do really see and know your own Vanity and absolute Need of him, you will omit no Opportunity to put up your Petitions to him; nay, even in the midst of your

bodily

bodily Labours and daily Employments, you will not fail to send up a short Ejaculation, and to pour out your Soul's earnest Longings to the God of your Salvation. The Sense and Recollection, that your glorified Master sitteth at the right Hand of his Father, praying for you, and constantly making Intercession on your Behalf, as it should fill your Soul with unspeakable Comfort, so will it give you Boldness to draw near with Faith, and incline you ever to join your imperfect Prayers, in the fullest Hope, with his all prevailing Intercession.

This is the first Means whereby you must seek for God's Grace ; but this, observe, has its Foundation and only Strength in and from the Word of God, the sacred Scriptures. All your Hopes, all your Expectations, all your Blessings arise from and are built thereupon ; you cannot pray truly, unless you believe in, and rely upon the Promises made in the Gospel. Therefore you must above all Things be careful and constant to read this blessed Book ; if you can, never, on any Account, pass a Day without reading some Portion of it ; no Matter for how much, only read a little daily, feed, meditate upon it, and digest it in your Heart. But if you are so unhappy as not to be able to read, take all possible Opportunities to hear it read, attend carefully to it, fix it in your Mind and Memory as much as you are able ; and reflect upon it, and every Part of it, with a Desire to receive spiritual Nourishment and Support.

Certain it is, that if you are desirous to attain true and heavenly Knowledge, and to become a *Christian* indeed, you will none of you omit to *worship God in the great Congregation*, to attend his Church and Service every Sabbath-Day at the least, or at any other Time, when Occasion and Opportunity will allow.

Oh my Brethren, it grieves me much, to see you so careless in this great Concern : What, shall the

blessed and divine Word of God be every *Sunday* so read and preached unto you, shall God so call you, so invite, so speak to, and plead with you by his Ministers, and yet you refuse to come to his Assembly, and to refresh your Soul with his heavenly Comforts? — I am sorry so many in this Place desert the Church, and spend the Sabbath in so vile and disorderly a Manner;* the Rich making it a Day of Entertainment, the Poor of Idleness and Debauchery. Hath not God, the great and terrible God, commanded you to keep his Sabbath *HOLY*? And have you no Fear of his Power, no Gratitude for his Love, nor any distant Hopes to enjoy that eternal *Rest*, of which the Sabbath is intended to remind and inform you? This is the Height of Sin, and if continued, must be the Destruction of our Place and Nation; for the Prophanation of the Sabbath is always the sure Forerunner of natural Calamities. Repent of it, repent, I beseech you, if you have any Regard for your eternal Souls, any Regard even for your temporal Well-being; but above all, if you have any Regard, any Love for your Master bleeding, dying on the Cross for you — living and praying for you at the right Hand of his Father, honour and reverence his Sabbaths, remember to keep them holy, so will he honour you, and your Children and Families shall witness his Blessings upon you; spend them not in worldly Employments, in the Ale-house, or in riding about to take your Pleasure (as you call it;) can you wonder, if your Children and Servants follow your Examples, and so make your

* It were greatly to be wished, the Custom of dining so late on a *Sunday* amongst the Rich was altered. This is made an Excuse for not coming to Church on an Afternoon: but were they to dine at one o' Clock, no very unseasonable Hour, there would be Time sufficient. A small Love of God, and a little Desire to serve him, would be sufficient to establish us in this Custom.

your Hearts throb and burst with Sorrow, when ruined and undone by Vice and Iniquity? — This is the natural Consequence, and what you must expect, if you set them the Pattern. I beseech you then once more, for their Sakes, spend the Lord's Day in his House and Service, in a due Discharge of your Duty to God, your Family, and yourselves; and so shall it indeed become a Day of *Holy Rest* and eternal Peace unto your Souls.

But to return: — The grand Means of Grace is the Word of God. *Faith*, we are told, *cometh by Hearing*; and *Hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. x. 17. Christ himself hath commanded us to *search the Scriptures*, John v. 39. Obey him therefore, and in humble Dependance upon the blessed Spirit; “read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by Patience and Comfort of God's holy Word, you may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed Hope of everlasting Life.” If thus searching after spiritual Blessings by *Prayer*, and in the *Word*, as relying upon that Word and its divine Authority, you will haste to obey the last dying Command of your Lord and Friend, and approach soon as possible to his *Holy Supper*; desirous to be a Partaker of his blessed Body and Blood, to strengthen and refresh your Soul therewith, “that so you may dwell in Christ, and Christ in you. That you may be one with Christ, and Christ with you;” and that you may plead his Sacrifice, “his full perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for your own, as well as the Sins of the whole World,” before the eternal Father.

* Have you only a true and sincere Desire to lead a new

* The Reader must observe that I have in this Part an Eye to the excellent *Communion Service* of our Church, which I would recommend to his serious Perusal — especially the Exhortation, beginning with *Dear-ly beloved in the Lord, ye, &c.* to the Consecration — Nay indeed, the whole is alike useful, and applied spiritually to our Hearts, will be of great Service and Instruction in Righteousness.

new Life, (which you cannot have without a true and sincere Repentance for Sin;) and as having that Desire, do you but apply to Christ, as the only Physician, that can cure and strengthen you, — you need not be afraid to come to the Lord's Supper, and to receive it to your Comfort; for thus Christ will accept you, and so render you more worthy of him, giving you his Righteousness and Spirit, and enduing you more and more with his Power from on high, to love and serve him. But persevere with all your Might, do all you can, so shall you find all done for and in you; nay, and far more than you could either expect or desire.

These are the three great Means, whereby (if you are resolved and anxious to attain that Faith in Christ Jesus, which alone can justify, sanctify, and glorify you) whereby you may, and will certainly attain it; namely, *Prayer*, the *Word*, and the *Lord's Supper*. But be assured, you can never receive any Advantage from these, unless you reform and amend your Life in that which is wrong, unless you become *New*, and cast away your old Man, with all his Affections and Lusts; for it will be utterly in vain to seek Christ and his Spirit, while you retain those Things which are his Enemies, and must necessarily drive him from you. Set about the Reformation of your Life then, *pluck out the right Eye*, and *cut off the right Hand*; and if you are sincere herein, the Spirit will assist you to perform the great Work, and bless you indeed, when you seek for him in these appointed Means, whereof I have been speaking. If thus endeavouring, and determined to lead a new Life, to cast away all your former evil Tempers, Habits, and Passions, you apply to God in the Way which he hath directed, and find your Soul under any Darkness or Doubts; under any Apprehensions or uneasy Dreads, (for ours is a Warfare, and Satan our deadly Enemy will attack us, and

and that more grievously at the Beginning, as loth to let us escape from his Snare) if you find any Temptations, Uneasiness, Damps or Coldness in Religion, apply more earnestly to *Prayer* and the *Word*. Seek in Private, to recover the Presence and Fruition of him whom your Soul desireth; seek him amidst his afflicted and suffering Members upon Earth, and there you will never fail to find him; seek him in Acts of Charity and Love, and also betake yourself to good and pious Persons, to be strengthened and refreshed by their Consolations and Experience in spiritual Things; and if blest with a Gospel Minister, fail not to open your Heart freely unto him, as one that careth for, watcheth over, and loveth you, that so, in the Words of our Church, "you may receive the Benefit of Absolution, together with ghostly Counsel and Advice, to the quieting of your Conscience, and avoiding all Scruple and Doubtfulness." Be not backward, I exhort you to apply; for be well assured, every Minister, who is a Servant of Christ, will rejoice in every Occasion, to serve and profit the meanest of those entrusted to his Charge.

And now, my good Neighbours and Fellow-Christians, let us stand still, and reflect a little. — I have shewn you the *Necessity* of looking to yourselves, — a Necessity plain and obvious; grounded on your Death and certain Judgment: — I have shewn you the *one only* Way to *Salvation* and *Happiness*; namely, *Faith in Christ Jesus*, the only Name whereby we can be saved. I have very fully shewn you what the true *Nature* of Faith in him is — that it means — "a real Conversion of the Heart, from the Evil of its Ways, through a Sense of God's Mercies in Christ Jesus, and of our Reconciliation through him; — a full Trust, and Reliance upon him, as the only Saviour of lost Mankind, and as the Lamb of God, which taketh away all

our Sins ; and upon this Sense and Trust, an active Love to him, a ready, chearful, filial Obedience to all his Commands." In short, a becoming in Christ *new Creatures*, new in Expectations, new in Tempers, new in Affections, new in Desires, new in Pursuits ; and, in short, new in all Things. — For *behold old Things are passed away, all Things are become New* to the Believer, the New Man in Christ, See Page 14. I have shewn you the *Means* to procure this Faith ; *Prayer, the Word, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.* And as my Design lead me only to short Hints, I trust you will, for your own Parts, enlarge upon them, by applying them to your Consciences ; consulting God's Words, considering your Master's inexpressible Love, the whole History of his Life, Death, and Passion, and the strong Exhortations to Faith and Obedience in the divine Epistles of his first and chosen Servants and Apostles. — And are you then resolved to follow this kind Advice, which it hath pleased God to give you, by my weak Means ? Or are you contented to throw both Body and Soul into Hell ? I trust, that you are of a better Mind. Give me Leave then to hope, that you will amend your Lives. — You have not *this Faith* now, and what is the Reason ? — Because you never properly sought for it, sincerely reforming your Lives, and seeking God. Now amend, now seek, and you shall assuredly find ; it may soon be too late. This Night perhaps God may require your Soul of you. Do your Part then, with all Expedition and Readiness, fear to delay it one Moment ; nothing can justify you, if you do delay it ; for since nothing can save us but Faith in Christ Jesus, and as Faith in Christ Jesus is not to be had, unless we desire it, and seek after it, surely the Uncertainty of our Death and Time of Departure hence, should arouse us to build surely and firmly on this

this only Rock of our Salvation, before we depart hence, and be no more seen !

But you will say, perhaps, I have sought, and am in great Doubt, whether I have attained this *Faith* ; for I find so many Oppositions, so many worldly Tempers and Desires to combat with, so many Damps, and Clouds, and Desertions, that I can scarcely dare to call myself a Christian. — Well, but my beloved, do you really *desire* to be a Christian ? — If you can reply from your Heart, you do, and as so desirous, perform your Part ; rest happy and satisfied, that this Work is of God, who in his own good Time will bring it to Perfection. — Do you allow yourself in the Practice of any *one* known Sin ? If you do, without all Controversy, the Spirit of God dwelleth not in you ; you are yet in the Gall of Bitterness. Repent therefore, and cast it away, *pluck it out*, though dear as a right Eye, otherwise you are not *born again* ; for he that is *born of God, doth not commit Sin*, as St. John assures us, 1 Ep. iii. 9. — Nay, *he is dead to Sin*, according to St. Paul, Rom. vi. 2. — And if we are not born again, we should ever bear in Mind, that we *cannot* enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ; See Page 13. —

But you do not allow yourself in the Practice of any known Sin, yet sometimes, through the Strength of Temptation, the Heat or Violence of your natural Temper, or some other Means, fall into Sin. — This is indeed a sad Case, and to be struggled against, with all your Might ; but not to be cast out as incurable and irrecoverable. If you are so unhappy as to fall, rise and renew your Speed and Repentance, with double Haste, and double Vigour, like St. Peter, instantly *go out and weep* ; have true Sorrow and Pungency of Heart, and be assured you are yet not forsaken of your God. For a Tear of Repentance cannot fall from your Eye, *unless he turn and look upon you*, St. Luke xxii. 61.

But Coldness, and Damps, and Languors, and Desertions frequently oppress you. — True, and so they will, till this Tabernacle be dissolved, and your House of Clay divested of its Inhabitant; * while we carry the Flesh, we must carry its Hindrances and Inconveniencies; no Man can be in a Prison, and yet free; let not these therefore, Oh Christian, discourage thee. Look at thy dear dying Master's gloomy horrid Hours of Desertion and Blackness, see him in the Garden sweating great Drops of Blood; hear him on the Cross crying out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* If the Father, for some Time, forsake such a Son, marvel not, that he should also for some Time forsake thee; but be careful always at such Times to follow your blessed Saviour's Example, to apply *more earnestly in Prayer*, to struggle more importunately with God. — And whenever worldly Passions arise in your Heart, the little Heavings and Burnings of inborn Pride, Self-Love, Vanity, &c. be above Measure jealous over yourself, with a godly Jealousy — fly to God with the sincerest Supplications, whether in publick or private; turn your Heart to him, and earnestly desire the *Son of David to have mercy upon you*, and to deliver you from this terrible *Legion* of in-dwelling Enemies.

For

* So says that divine Writer, *Thomas a' Kempis*, Book I. Chap. xxii.

So long as we carry about us this frail Body, we cannot be *without Sin*, or live without Trouble. — We would be gladly freed from all Misery, but seeing by Sin we have lost our Innocency, we have also lost true Felicity. — Therefore we must have Patience, and wait for the Mercy of God, till this our Iniquity pass away, and Mortality be swallowed up of Life. — “ See also his 13th Chapter of *resisting Temptations*. — Prize this little Book, and read it constantly; for it is a rich Gem, an invaluable Treasure.”

For those who have really and sincerely, through the Love of Christ constraining them, altered and amended their Lives, and repented them truly of their past Misdoings; who actuated by that Love, are fervent in their Duty to God, serving him with all their Might, and zealous in their Duty to their Neighbour; *loving even as they have been loved, and ever mindful of him, whose Commandment it is, that we love one another, even as he hath loved us, John xv. 12.* — Whose Hearts are set upon the Things of a better World, who constantly seek Christ in his heavenly Kingdom, and in Heart and Mind there with him continually dwell; who relying on his infinite Love, are blest with the glorious Foretaste of his divine Favour; — for such, the Peace and Consolation in their own Breasts, sealed and witnessed by these happy Fruits, is the most indisputable *Mark* of their Acceptance with God, even their Father; of the Truth and Excellence of their *Faith*, and the fullest Testimony to their Sonship and Adoption. Thus “*the Spirit itself doth indeed bear Witness with their Spirit, that they are the Children of God, Rom. viii. 16.* And as being thus his Children and Heirs, *Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*, they can lift up their Hearts to their Father in happy peaceful Dependance upon him; and though ever anxious to approve themselves in his Sight, are freed from all servile Fear, and base Constraint in serving him; influenced by Love, they go on zealously in his Service, and as knowing that the Testimony of their Adoption is *twofold*, rest not in one without the other, nor imagine to themselves any false deceitful *Peace* from God’s Spirit, unless it be accompanied with the Witness of their own. But blest with this *Peace*, bearing Testimony to *their Conscience*, ever resigned, they await their Master’s good Pleasure; ever chearful, they enjoy his Presence and Promises, and ever happy, they go about doing good; “*following the Example of their Saviour*

Saviour Christ, endeavouring always, more and more, to be made like unto him," and wholly to be conformed to his glorious Image, which after God is created anew in Righteousness and true Holiness.

This Happiness, my dearly beloved Friends and Fellow Christians, is now offered to you all : Behold, it is in your Power ; whatever is your State, high or low, rich or poor, it is offered alike to all, *without Money and without Price.* Delay not, I entreat you, but haste and accept of the Blessing, that so my Labours may not be in vain in the Lord ; nor your being in this World, the Ground of eternal Lamentation in the next.

" If therefore there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies — fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded, having the self-same Love ; being of one Accord, of one Mind — *Philip. ii. 1.* — And that you may be so, I, and doubtless every sincere Minister of Christ will pray with me, in the Words of the blessed *St. Paul*, — (and so stir up your Hearts, to pray for yourselves and us —) " Bowing our Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named — That he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with Might, by his Spirit in the inner Man ; that Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith. That ye, being rooted and grounded in Love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Heighth ; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the Fulness of God. — Now unto him that is able to do, exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us ; unto him be Glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all Ages, World without End." *Amen. Ephes. iv. 14, — 21.*

